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NEW LIGHT UPON THE PROBLEM OF REINCARNATION

BY

D. GOPAUL CHETTY,

Late Editor, "New Reformer," Madras and author of "New Light upon the Philosophy of India," "Chidambara Rahasyam Revealed," and other Philosophical Works.

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1933

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New Revelation

THROUGH

Swedenborg

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INTRODUCTION.

Concerning the state of man after death, four distinct theories have been advanced. First is the theory of **Annihilation.** According to the advocates of this theory, a chemical union of two independent living germs of life results in the formation of the fertilized ovum later to be born as a child and that consequently a dissolution of the body is an extermination of the soul. They must know that such union was not originally necessary, but in later ages, the practice was one adopted. It appears that all life at some early period of development increased by division without exterior co-operation. Later on, they not only continued this process of reproduction but also became bisexual. Still later, some types separated into distinct sexes. By not knowing or understanding the doctrines of spiritual and divine influxes, materialists hold this belief which is so rare as to be almost negligible. The second is the theory of **Resurrection** at some far off judgment day. This theory is quite irrational and still seems to be believed by the Christians of the orthodox churches. The "Larger Catechism of the Anglican Church" has the following :—"At the last day there shall be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust; when they that are found alive shall in a moment be changed

and the self-same bodies of the dead, which were laid on the grave, been then united to their souls for ever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ." However, the resurrection of the body is a dying belief. The next is the theory of **Immediate Resurrection.** Swedenborg enunciates it and Saiva Siddhanta upholds it. Swedenborg says: "The spirit of man, after the separation, remains a little while in the body, but not longer than till the total cessation of the heart's action, which takes place with variety, according to the state of the disease from which man dies..... As soon as this motion ceases, the man is resuscitated; but this is done by the Lord alone. By resuscitation is meant the drawing forth of the spirit of man from the body, and its introduction into the spiritual world, which is commonly called resurrection." (**Heaven and Hell**, 447).

The New Church differs from the old one in three particulars; the subject of the resurrection, the manner of the resurrection and the time at which it is effected.

The Saiva Siddhanta says :—"The snake dropping its skin, the bird leaving its shell and the yogi leaving his body and entering another, illustrate the parting of the soul from his gross body after death and its entry into a different world of consciousness, with its intelligence changed as in the passing from a waking state into dream condition." (**Siddhiar, supak** : II. 2.38).

The next are the Doctrines of Reincarnation and Metempsychosis. Pythagoras was no doubt a believer in these theories. He thought and believed that he himself was one of the Trojan heroes, whose shield he knew at a

glance in the Temple of Juno, where it was hung up. Plato, his disciple also believed in this. What was it that attracted Plato in the Theory of Transmigration? It appears that Plato who made a Science of the moral training of the mind was attracted by soul wandering as a scheme of soul-evolution. Instead of working at it as a matter which pre-supposed an ethical root, (which is the Indian view) he looked upon it as an ethical root which pre-supposed a matter of fact. He was influenced a little no doubt, by the desire to get rid of Hades, "an unpleasant place" as he says "and not true" for which he felt a peculiar antipathy, but he was influenced far more by seeing in soul wandering a rational theory of the ascent of the soul, a Darwinism of the spirit. "We are plants" he said "not of earth but of heaven." But it takes the plants of heaven a long time to grow. Plato found the theory of Transmigration entirely consoling, but the Indian finds it entirely the reverse. It may be that, Plato took the theory as a beautiful symbol; while the Indian takes it as a dire reality.

It appears that India was the home of this theory. From here it went to Egypt, thence to Greece and other countries. The Zohar knows it. Zorastrianism and Muhammadanism do not teach reincarnation. Although the Pharisees among the Jews believed in it, it did not belong to pure Judaism. Ancient Babylon, ancient China and ancient Egypt knew nothing of it.

There is no use of denying that the doctrine existed during the time of Jesus, because a question was put to him

as to who sinned, "this man or his parent that he should be born blind." The doctrine seems to have existed in Europe till the 6th century A. D. as is evident from the fact that the Council of Constantinople thundered in A. D. 543 as follows :—"Whosoever believes in the fabled prior existence of souls, let him be anathema." This shows that many people believed in the views of Origin. The ignorance that swamped over Europe during the Dark Ages carried away belief in Reincarnation as it carried away all philosophy and everything else. Mediaeval Europe did not offer the soil in which could flourish any wide sweeping and philosophical view of man's nature and destiny. But by the advent of Swedenborg, a great flood of light has been thrown upon all the problems of philosophy and we shall say what we see about this question of reincarnation under that light. Swedenborg did not write much about this theory but whatever little he said is clear and to the point. A reference to **Heaven and Hell**, 135,256, T. C. R. 79, 171 and 769 etc., will convince us that he rejected the Doctrine. His description of the nature of soul, its growth in the body and many other teachings of his, will convince any one of the falsity of this theory and its scientific impossibility.

I. TWO DOCTRINES OF SWEDENBORG.

The problems of Reincarnation and Metempsychosis are essentially spiritual in their nature. A rational conception of the soul is necessary before one can decide as to the truth or falsity of the theories. No doubt the Hindu Philosophy knows that gross bodies are derived from the spiritual substances

but it does not describe the details of that production. Without some knowledge of the two important and illuminating Doctrines of Swedenborg, which he calls the Doctrine of Degrees and the Doctrine of Correspondences, it is impossible he says, for anything to be clearly known about the spiritual world and its influx into the natural world, of the difference between men, animals and plants or of the state of men after death. These doctrines, he states are also a key for opening the Word of God and arriving at its interior wisdom. Without a right understanding of these two doctrines, no one is competent to pass judgment on the problems of Reincarnation and Metempsychosis. The mere names of these doctrines are known to the Hindus but no Hindu commentator has explained them.

We shall here briefly state what those doctrines are, but would refer the reader to Swedenborg's works for a fuller understanding of them.

Degrees are of two kinds, the one called "continuous degrees" and the other "discrete degrees." Continuous degrees are variations of the same thing on the same plane, such as from fine to gross, from heat to cold, from light to shade, etc.; but discrete degrees refer to the relation between things which are not on the same plane but on distinctly different planes, one above or within the other and which yet make one, not by continuity, that is by one being continued into or mixed up with the other, but by what Swedenborg calls "Correspondence." Thus, it may be stated that the soul which is spiritual, is above, or within, and distinct from, and yet makes one with, the body, which is natural ; thought

which is spiritual has a like relation to speech which is natural; will, which is spiritual, has a similar relation to action which is natural; and so on. From these few instances we can see that the spiritual, although on a distinctly different plane, operates upon its natural correspondent, so as to make one with it; their relation being that of discrete degrees united by correspondences. This is the nearest outline of a condition of things which is universal; the whole natural world "corresponds" to the whole spiritual world not only collectively, but in each part and least particulars; and it is because of the existence of such corresponding discrete degrees throughout all natural and spiritual creation, that God is everywhere present therein and yet is not commingled with it.

One of the laws in conformity to which God creates is that He creates them through or by means of these discrete degrees—higher things being instruments by means of which He creates lower things, each several higher thing being an instrument by means of which each several lower thing is created. Thus all spirit is higher than matter and it is through spirit, matter is made to assume form. What is thus true of the spirit and the body is true of the whole spiritual world, which would include our own spirit and all that belongs to it and all of the material world. It is through the spiritual world as a whole that the material world as a whole is created.

All things below which are created by or through things above, correspond to them. It is indeed by means of this Correspondence that creation is effected. The creative

energy flowing into one degree of existence flows through it and creates the degree below by this law of Correspondence; which may be regarded not only as a law and a fact but also as a force, animated like all forces, by the only primal and orginal force. This relation exists from the summit to the bottom, everywhere through the range of existence. It is by means of this that all created things are connected together into one whole and that this whole creation is connected with its Creator.

II. THE NATURE OF THE SOUL.

The soul or spirit is no vaporous or ethereal pressure, but it is a living substantial and completely equipped person. It is a substance and has form. If it had no essence or substance, it would not have that which makes it to be what it is or to be at all and could not have any form. If it had an essence and not a form, it would have no existence; for it would not have that by which it could exist and act or stand forth in manifested and active being. But it is not so with shape; for this some things have and others have not. The air we breathe has no shape but it has form. Our affections and thoughts are without shape but have form. Shape is only an external of form, which is moulded by the form and expresses the form to the senses of sight and touch. Form is clothed by shape in some cases. The shape does in some sort reveal and manifest the form as the form manifests the essence or substance. The body itself is only the shape and not the form of the man but it is adjusted to the form and reveals the form.

Swedenborg says : " Man cannot think and will unless there be a subject, which is substance, from which and in which he thinks and wills ; whatever is supposed to exist without a substantial subject is nothing. This may be known from the fact that man cannot see without an organ which is the subject of his sight, nor hear without an organ which is the subject of his hearing ; sight and hearing without these organs are nothing, nor do they exist. So, also with thought, which is internal sight and perception, which is internal hearing unless they were in substances and originated from those things, which are organic forms and subjects of the faculties, they would not exist at all. From these things it may be evident that the spirit of man is equally in a form, and that it is in the human form, and that it enjoys sensories and senses as well when separated from the body as when in it ; and that all the life of the eye and all the life of the ear—in a word, all the life of sense which man has—is not of his body, but of his spirit in those organs, and in their most minute particulars. Hence it is that spirits see, hear and feel like men, not however in the natural world but in the spiritual, after separation from the body. The natural sensation which the spirit had when he was in the body was the result of the material part which was adjoined to him ; but even then he had spiritual sensation at the same time by thinking and willing." (**Heaven and Hell**, 434).

We said soul is a substance. Of what substance is it formed is the next question that has to be answered.

There are spiritual substances of which all things in the spiritual world are formed. It is not a rarefied form of matter but superior to and much more substantial than

anything known to bodily substances. Transcending our bodily sense-perceptions, it is tangible, visible, cognisable to the perceptions of the soul. This is the substance of which the human soul is formed. It is of that all things " beyond the veil " are composed.

III. THE GROWTH OF THE SOUL.

The idea that the soul grows seems very absurd to those who have been accustomed to look upon it as a formless essence or a vital force and it is no doubt absurd from that point of view. But the point of view is false as we have proved just above. The spirit is in the human form and gives form to the material body. The body grows as the spirit grows. We know this from abundant experience. When a little child leaves its material body, the body does not grow any more but soon turns to dust. There is no power in the elements of matter, in carbon, nitrogen and phosphorus, to organise themselves into a living body. There is no more power in the food we eat to make brain and muscle, nerve and bone than there is in the clay to mould itself into bricks and in the bricks to arrange themselves into a house. The spirit forms the body and the body grows because the spirit grows.

Let us next examine as to how the soul forms the body or through the soul the body is formed. Two independent living germs of life unite to form the fertilised ovum later to be born as a child. The life in the impregnated ovum is spiritual life. It must here be noted that if man's

life and soul came immediately from the life and soul of his parents, it is but another example of God's manner of work in making everything through the changing of some thing else. It gathers first from the mother and afterwards from suitable objects, brought within its reach, the materials out of which it forms the body. We know that the body grows from the first living germs to the full maturity of the adult man ; so does the spirit grow from the first germ of spiritual life to its adult condition. And as the spirit grows, the material body which is to be its clothing for a while, is formed by or through the spirit. For it is always the spirit which is formative or causative and the body which is formed is the effect. The one is a complete and perfect expression of the other. The material form develops because the spiritual prototype of which it is the material expression also develops from its simple beginning. This is agreeable to Saiva Siddhanta.

Let us examine the growth of the child. The first tatva brought to play for the purpose of the growth of the child in the womb is the earth tatva. We know vegetable growths are formed of the first tatva earth alone ; so the mass in the first month of the child is formed of the said tatva alone. In other words, the growth or evolution of the soul from the kevala condition corresponds to the growth or evolution of man from the said state of mass. The next stage of the child in utero corresponds to the animal form conchfer furnished to souls in evolution. According to physiology, the child up to the sixth month is in a state of plant getting only gradual growth in size. At the end of the sixth month the weight is about a pound, the hair

is darker, eyelashes have now been formed as well as the eyebrows. The nails reach up to the end of the fingers. No organ of sense or action is developed. Up to this, it is only vegetable growth. In the seventh month, the extremities, nose etc., that were visible in the second month becomes well developed. That is of the organs of sense, the 'nose' becomes developed and fit for use. The sense of smell and taste having been developed, it is said that if the foetus is born in this month, it may survive. The child in the seventh month or until it is born corresponds to lives of two senses. The next stage is that of the birth of the child. The first experience of the child is to see *ie.*, it puts the eye tatva in operation. This is the evolution of the fire tatva. In this way the evolution of others may be explained.

If a blind cell of matter can be made to evolve the five-senses and in time develop an eye etc., what would not spiritual cells of soul as distinguished from material cells do ? They are certain to give us the rudimentary metaphysical eyes and metaphysical means of obtaining knowledge in the future life. The soul is probably developed in the body not for mortal use but for later spiritual life. As cells of matter which we see in the world propagate themselves by division in the material world, perhaps mental or soul cells, which we cannot sense, may in like manner or even by co-operation with the material likewise divide or cast off circles or buds of soul life to develop into mental identities. Some divine parent or soul is the source of all souls as one seedless orange tree and its descendants furnished sprouts for millions of independent trees in orange groves.

The soul or spirit is, as we have said, an organised spiritual and substantial form. Composed of spiritual substance, it is organised just as wonderfully as is the earthly body. Every nerve and artery, every limb and feature, every organ of the body exists in spiritual substance in the soul. The spirit of man has eyes to see with, ears to hear, a tongue to speak with, all perfectly formed and completely under its control. Swedenborg says : " The spirit of a man has equally a heart and consequently a pulse, also lungs and therefore respiration." Further he says : " the beat of the heart of the spirit and respiration of its lungs flow into the beat of the heart and the respiration of the lungs in a man in the world." Further he says : " The life of the body which is natural exists and subsists by means of that influx and ceases by means of its withdrawal, thus by separation. In a word, the material body corresponds to the soul, not only generally but also specifically and in so doing fulfils all the conditions of the Doctrine of Correspondence. The soul is so exactly adapted to the body that it animates every part and finds in the body the clothing for all of itself. It is able to make use of every part of the body to do the act which each portion of the soul asks of that part of the body which clothes it. Swedenborg says: " The spirit of man acts into every part of the body, even the minutest, in so much that if any part is not actuated by the spirit or the spirit is not active in it, it does not live." That this is so, may be known to every one from this alone ; that thought and will actuate each and all things of the body with such entire command, that everything concurs and whatever does not concur is not a part of the body, and is also cast out as

something in which is no life ; thought and will are of the spirit of man, and not of body.

" When a man enters the spiritual world or the life after death, he is in a body as in the world,.....But this body is then spiritual and thus separated or purified from earthly things, and when what is spiritual touches and sees what is spiritual, it is just as when what is natural touches and sees what is natural ; hence, a man when he has become a spirit does not know otherwise than that he is in his body in which he was in the world.....A man's spirit also enjoys every external and internal sense which he enjoyed in the world; he sees as before ; he also smells and tastes and when he is touched, he feels the touch as before ; he also longs, desires, craves, thinks.....as before..... so that it cannot be said that man after death, which is only the death of the body, has lost anything of himself."

Even according to the Hindu Philosophy, in the *Puri-astaka*, which is the spiritual body of the soul after death, the spirits live over the life they have lived in this world in a more intensified form than on earth. If in this world, their thoughts were good and pleasant, they feel thousand times more happy in the astral world, but if they lead a vicious life, their bad thoughts haunt them over and their suffering is multiplied a thousand-fold. This agrees with what Swedenborg says, but the Hindus say that the spirits are born again to work out their karma.

Even according to the Hindu Philosophy, the soul has to pass through three developing and progressing stages, viz, the Kevala, the Asuddha, and Suddha avasthas. But how it

could say that in the second condition, there is the possibility of reincarnation, is not possible to comprehend.

Abdul Baha, one of the great teachers, who established Bahaism in the world says: "But you have asked for arguments of the impossibility of reincarnation; this is what we must now explain. The first argument for its impossibility, is that the outward is the expression of the inward; the earth is the mirror of the kingdom; the material world corresponds to the spiritual world. Now observe that in the sensible world, appearances are not repeated, for no being in any respect is identical with nor the same, as another being. The sign of singleness is visible and apparent in all things. If all the granaries of the earth were full of grain, you would not find two grains alike, the same identical without any distinction. It is certain that there will be differences and distinctions between them. As the proof of uniqueness exists in all things and an Oneness and Unity of God is apparent in the reality of all things, the repetition of the same appearance is absolutely impossible. Therefore, reincarnation which is the repeated appearance of the same spirit with its former essence and condition in this same world of appearance is impossible and unrealisable. As the repetition of the same appearance is impossible and interdicted for each of the material beings, so for spiritual beings also, a return to the same condition whether in the arc of descent or in the arc of ascent, is interdicted and impossible, for the material corresponds to the spiritual." He further says: "When the shell is opened it will be apparent and evident whether it contains a pearl or worthless matter.

When once the plant has grown, it will bring forth either thorns or flowers; there is no need for it to grow up again. Besides, advancing and moving in the world, in direct line, according to the natural law, is the course of existence; and a movement contrary to the system of law of nature is the cause of non-existence. The return of the soul after death is contrary to the natural movements and opposed to the Divine System." (SOME ANSWERED QUESTIONS, pp. 318–326).

From all that has been hitherto said, we may rightly conclude in the words of Mr. J. L. Williams, the author of that famous pamphlet on "Reincarnation," that "Reincarnation is a scientific and philosophic impossibility, because there can be no possible correspondential relation between a more or less developed spiritual organism and a developing material organism, and because all material organisms originate as simple forms in obedience to the activities within them of spiritual forms of like simple character and because all development or evolution on the material plane is accompanied by and preceded in order of being by evolution on the spiritual plane."

IV. SOME PERSUADING DEDUCTIONS.

Sivagnana Siddhiar says:—"If you ask whence the gross body is derived, it is derived from the spiritual body. If you ask again, whether, if so, the forms should not all be similar, we answer, no. Though gold is one, different kinds of ornaments like chain, etc., are made direct therefrom. The creation of all these forms and universes are brought about by the only God, Siva," *Supak.* II. 2-47.

This stanza therefore says that all forms of life are made from the same material. It has been said that protoplasm cells are nearly alike in all forms of life whether vegetable or animal, and that spermatozoa life is only a sort of vegetable life. The supporters of these statements also point out the gills and other marks in the foetus to indicate that man evolved from lower animals. We do not think that biological research has established these claims beyond any doubt. But we must not omit to state that one of the most extraordinary of the recent discoveries of Science is that of Professor Bose of Calcutta, that inorganic substances exhibit indications of life, respond to electrical stimulus, are affected by poisons and in other ways act as hitherto only living tissues have been supposed to act.

Mr. John O Yeiser, the author of EVOLUTION PROVING IMMORTALITY, says in his book : "In considering the development of a soul, I have often wondered whether intelligence like matter, incapable of being reduced to nothing, was not made up of infinitesimal mind particles capable of division, and sub-division, to the extreme limits which confound us in separating the particles of matter, to its ultimate limit. If so, then, as truly as only about two dozen letters of our alphabets are used, in different combinations, to make the worlds' literature ; and as truly as ten figures, from one to cypher, are used to make the millions of billions of numbers in the worlds' calculations ; and likewise, as truly as only 12 notes are used in different combinations to make all music of the world ; and also as truly as a lesser number of primary cells of matter are only placed in different combinations, to make the different multitudinous forms of matter ;

so also may we expect similar primitive spiritual cells of intellect, or particles of mind, to be put together in different numbers, and in different ways to constitute the many various forms of life."

The same author further says : "Considering the sperm life, we are able to distinguish a slight difference between the various species. But after a union with the ovum they revert to a pulpy protoplasmic mass, as does the caterpillar, from which a particular submicrospic cell of life begins to develop, so low in the scale of life, that all travel a path of development from which it is impossible to distinguish one species from another."

But in the chapter on "Reincarnation" in his book stated above, he rejects the theory on various good grounds.

Embryology may show that in its pre-natal growth the embryo of man exhibits the features of the lower animals and cannot be distinguished from them. This fact Haeckel affirms, can be only elucidated by assuming a common parentage (*Riddle of the Universe*, page, 23). And second, the work of Darwin in explaining the methods of nature in perfecting the various species of animals, appears to support the theory of evolution ; since, according to his theory of natural selection, the animals in their classes are ever striving towards a better and higher expression. However, the facts of embryology and natural selection can be seen to support a very different theory of evolution, if that subject is viewed from a different standpoint altogether. In the "New Church

Review," July 1925, Mr. W. C. Dick, answers these objections as follows :—

"A new theory, lucidly and powerfully expounded by Thomas Child in his "Root Principles" postulates that each class originated from a single cell; that these classes, were not produced by development from the lower, nor were they produced as separate creations; but that each class sprang directly from the single cell, and therefore passed, *within itself*, through all the formations of the class beneath it".....

This theory is based upon two principles, which are derived from the philosophy of Swedenborg. The first is one we have already seen operating in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, and may be expressed as follows to apply to the animal kingdom; there is no primal protoplasmic matter out of which all the orders of the animal kingdom have been created by development—the higher from the lower. The second is treated at length by James Hyde in his lectures on "Heredity," page 31 and is expressed thus :

"As heredity only transmits such qualities to the like form (for qualities answer to forms, so that human qualities, for instance, cannot cohere with quadrupeds), the parent cannot produce anything except those qualities on the image of his own form."

In Child's "*Root Principles*" page, 79, we find the same stated in converse form, ("acquired powers must be according to the forms acquiring them"); and it is shown there that development can only be within the limits of the developing form; otherwise there would be no separate

identity of classes, but only one continuous form. This is contrary to the facts of science, which group organisms into distinct classes with fundamental differences and which do not show continuous development notwithstanding the special pleading of evolutionists for intermediaries or links which do not appear.

The facts of science themselves guarantee the validity of this theory, that the orders of the animal kingdom were created from a succession of single cells, the higher containing within themselves all the potentialities of the lower, passing through in the course of development all the stages of the lower in succession until fruition is reached when a new and higher order emerges. The facts of embryology, corroborates this theory, because by it the embryonic traces of lower orders are fully accounted for. The facts upon which the theory of natural selection is based are also accepted as true and they also substantiate this new theory; but in this theory these facts have new light shed upon them, etc., etc." . . .

At the end of Art., 166, *Divine Love and Wisdom*, Swedenborg says : "Life acts into it, according to any change of form which has been induced."

Creation is the work of God but not an isolated and far distant act; the Divine is ever creating by its influx into the spiritual and natural worlds; the created forms exhibiting mutually dependent degrees of life. The passage above quoted throws a revealing light upon the development theory. New forms of life have appeared upon the earth from time to time, but these have not been the result of

happy accident, as the evolutionists maintain : If existing forms have been modified so as to produce new species, it has been by the infusion of new life from the spiritual world into the modified forms. Life acts into it according to any change of form which has been induced.

V. DOCTRINE OF METEMPSYCHOSIS.

Differing somewhat in detail, the theory substantially is as follows. He who is not good passes at death into the form of some animal and thence into another and another until the circle of expiation being completed, he becomes again man, and a redeemed and happy one. For the same reasons hitherto advanced, the spiritual body of man cannot enter into the protoplasm cells of a beast as it is against the Doctrine of Correspondence. Animals have not and men have the power of thinking about their thoughts and all the differences between them are derivable from this difference ; and this again is derived from the primary difference that animals have only an external nature while men have both an external and an internal. Men and animals think first in their external minds. Animals stop there because they have no other mind. "There is in every angel and also in every man, an inmost or supreme degree or region of the mind, into which the divine sphere most directly flows and from which it regulates the other regions of the mind which follows in succession according to Divine order. This inmost or highest degree may be called the Lord's entrance to angels and men and His special dwelling place within them. This is why man with respect to the higher faculties of his

mind can be raised by the Lord to Himself, can believe in Him, love Him and thus see Him. But this is not the case with the animals" *(Heaven and Hell, Art. 39)*. There is no continuity of life after death in the case of animals. The animals live for the sake of their bodies only. We need not go into details with respect to the other differences. It will simply be a great calamity if man should ever be returned to this earth as an animal and it will be a great fall for one, even in thought, to enter the animal class.

The late Mr. J. M. Nallaswami Pillai, a Tamil scholar of great philosophic fame, answered the objections as follows in his Commentary on "*Siddhiar*":—

"But the difficulty will vanish when as herein pointed out that the different kinds of gross bodies possessing form are all derived from the more subtle and formless matter. From this formless subtle matter, it will be as easy to form one body as another, the two chief powers bringing about this form being the supreme Power of God and the lesser power of the Karma of each individual. But we seem to doubt as to how the man's superior intelligence can vanish into the brute's intelligence. The intelligence does not suffer in any way but is simply covered over or hidden by the particular body for the time being, just letting in a little light or more, and just as we cage a wild animal, so that the brutal instincts of the man may not run riot and cause more damage to himself and others. And the difficulty of most people will vanish also when the fundamental tenet of Hinduism is grasped, namely, that the soul of man is in itself perfect but is eternally covered over by Anava or Avidya and is further

covered over by Mayamala and the effect of the last covering is just to give as much opening as is necessary for letting in the light of God, to shine on the individual soul and to make itself shine. The higher and higher the body, the greater and greater will be the intelligence displayed. But as often happens, man misuses his intelligence and powers; these have to be curbed and limited again for a time, and so a less developed body is given, where he cannot be able to use all such superior powers he possessed for mischief. When these powers have been thoroughly subjugated, modulated in perfect harmony, the individual gains back a better body for his further cleansing." This defence gives no satisfaction.

How is it that a great philosopher like Pythagoras taught this doctrine? The Science of Correspondence will explain it. Man, the microcosm or little world as Pythagoras and Plato and so many of the ancients called him, represents the universe. Thus all animals that ever were or can exist live by virtue of the fact that they severally represent some of the elements, faculties or qualities of the human character.

Now we know, that Pythagoras had an inner and secret doctrine, never published and taught only in private to the initiated under the most solemn obligation of secrecy. It is not too much to suppose that these two doctrines, the inner and outer, had some relation to each other. The one might have been for the masses and the other for the higher people. It has been said that those who are wicked would improve if they are told they would be reborn as animals of the character they possess. This would be in exact conformity with the law which prevails over the relation between internal and external truth.

That it is allegorical, there is no doubt. Pythagoras learnt the doctrine in Egypt and all the world knows how the Egyptians concealed the most imposing doctrines under the cloak of fables or allegory.

The supposed teaching in some Hindu Scriptures that the human soul for its misdeeds is compelled in subsequent births to enter the bodies of animals is a standing puzzle to both oriental and western scholars. In the Code of Manu, there is apparent exactitude as to the kind of animals from worms to Sudras which particular sins will oblige the souls to take birth in, and at this day there are millions of Hindus who accept the statements literally.

If we could only understand the inner meaning of the Sacred Scriptures, all difficulties will vanish. With reference to births in animals, we have to bear in mind that animals are commom symbols of desire and passion in all Scriptures. This follows from the fact that action in animals always proceeds from their appetites, desires and passions, and therefore they are appropriate symbols for these qualities. Man possesses these animal qualities in his lower nature, hence when he incarnates, he is born in the "animals." Birth therefore in birds and beasts simply means that the karmic results of mental action lead the ego into astral conditions of the same kind as higher and lower animal life.

Mr. G. A. Gaskell of London, in the course of an article on the "*Sacred Language and Metempsychosis*" published in my magazine, the late "New Reformer" in 1910, said :

"Next we have in Manu an examination of the three gunas or qualities pervading all existence. *Satva* (goodness-truth) is said to have the form of knowledge, and induces in the soul, serenity, bliss and light. *Rajas* (activity) has the form of love and hate, inducing pain and dissatisfaction and a longing after objects of sense, which is hard to conquer. *Tamas* (ignorance) is coupled with delusion and error. A list of results of the exercise of the three qualities is added, in which the uplifting power of *Satva* is shown in "Study of the Vedas," i.e., ordering of the life in accordance with the divine law; "austerity" *i.e.*, limiting of outgoing activities etc. The results from *Rajas* are given as interest in objects of desire, the wandering of thought among the sensations and ideas etc. The results from *Tamas* are specified as various evil states of mind connected with desire, passion and sense.

Satva leads to the state of Gods *i.e.*, to the realisation of the highest ideals. *Rajas* to the state of men *i.e.*, to the development of all mental faculties. *Tamas* to the state of beasts *i.e.*, to the functioning of the desires and passions. It is then laid down that the threefold course of transmigration depends on the *gunas* to be again threefold-high, middling and low according to the particular nature of the acts and knowledge.

Then the highest, middle and lower states of all the *gunas* are given. The higher states caused by *Tamas* are—"Karanas, suparnas, hypocrites, Rakshasas, Pisakas," *i.e.*, love of admiration, ambitions, love of outside show, desire for power over others, greed for money."

The middle states caused by *Tamas* are: "elephants, horses, Sudras, despicable barbarians, lions, tigers, boars," *i.e.*, superior animal qualities, astral intelligence or sagacity, instinct centred in human body, low cunning, the passions.

The lower states caused by *Tamas* are: "immovable beings, insects, fishes, snakes, tortoises, cattle, wild animals, *i.e.*, bad habits, primitive desires, delusions, gross desires, low appetites, subserviency, ungoverned passions.

This category of the threefold action of the *gunas* and what they lead to is called the "whole system of transmigrations."

Some further particulars are then given. It is said that in consequence of attachment to the senses, and of non-performance of duties, "fools the lowest of men, reach the vilest of births." This refers to the undeveloped personalities (fools) which in rebirth attract to themselves gross astral matter. A detailed account is set forth of suffering thereby entailed by the personalities in various incarnations (hells).

Then in figurative language sins are referred to, which oblige the egos to take birth in various animals which we may now understand as referring to the kinds of astral matter which compose the desire and passion natures of human beings.

It would be tedious to translate all this, and I think I have said enough to show the lines on which I am convinced an interpretation of the doctrine of metempsychosis runs. Even popular language endorses this view, for it is

common to speak of "animal propensities" in man, and that man shares in him the nature of the brutes" (May 1910, *New Reformer*).

Another writer thus explains the doctrine. "In the ancient dialect of astronomy, the earth was said to enter into the constellations of the ram, the bull, the goat etc., and thus to pass from one animal into another, until she had gone through all the signs of the zodiac. Now, as diseased souls remain for sometime in the sphere of the earth, thus travelling the constellations, they were said, in a language that has been completely misunderstood, *to transmigrate into animals*, particularly into such as predominated at the time of their disease.

Hence it may be right to conclude that the statements in the Hindu Scriptures regarding metempsychosis may after all be simply allegorical.

VI. WHY WAS MAN GIVEN A BODY ?

In the Kevala State, "the soul is non-intelligent, it is formless, imperishable; it is not united to *Rajas* and other gunas, nor to *Kala* and other Tattvas; it is actionless, markless; it is not a self-agent; it cannot enjoy fruits; it is united to Anava; and it is Vibhu, omnipresent; (*Siddhiar* Sup. Sutra IV. 3, 38)." The Anava mala plunges it in ignorance. The soul is capable of many things. The Lord therefore out of his mercy, gives suitable bodies to the souls, "to remove the *Mala* by these bodies as medicines, and then

gives the souls the highest bliss and crowns them with His own Lotus Feet." (*Siddhiar*, *Supak.* II. 3, 51). Swedenborg also says that the object of creating the human race was to make a heaven out of them. But why should God give a body in this world for that purpose ?

Dr. J. J. Garth Wilkinson in his book on "*Human Science and Divine Revelation*" says: "Now all completed creations proceed from their first principles or protomorps in characteristic organic order to their full development, which in the language of Swedenborg is their ultimate. In this way the human body in this world, is the ultimate of the man who dwells within it. Therein he comes into his last realization. So, body is always the ultimate of spirit. The whole natural world is the ultimate of the spiritual world.....Further, the ultimate degree, the thing in act and in fact, is in all its power; or "all power exists in ultimates." Take the body away and the man has no longer power of pressure, in the natural world; he can only have it then in the spiritual world in which again, he is embodied and ultimated. Take the natural world away and the spiritual world would have no power, because no basis; and its everlasting end, of replenishment by fresh men and women, would also perish.....For "the ultimate degree is the complex, continent and basis of all that precedes it." It is the complex, because it involves all in a common realization. It is the continent, because it contains all and holds it together. It is the basis because it founds and establishes the end and fixes reality." The earth is such an ultimate reality or basis intended by the Lord to support the kingdoms of nature. The whole creation is represented in it;

and it blossoms and lives upwards again because of its complex substance and effort of ends. It is the containing mother of the creatures."

The various planes or degrees of existence which are found everywhere in nature and man, all rest upon each other. The foot of the ladder stands upon the earth. The highest degrees are not *fully formed* first, but last. They do, indeed, exist as causes, or as we say, in potency but not actually. They cannot become fully formed without a basis to rest upon. The spiritual body cannot be organised directly from spiritual substances. They must have material basis to rest upon—a material covering to contain their fine essences until they are deposited and wrought into such organic and permanent forms, that they may become the subjects of thought and affection and also fit to attain the Lotus Feet of the Lord. No artist can paint a picture without a canvas.

Thus the earths are the seminaries of the heavens. Upon them, the Lord plants human souls as the husbandman plants seeds in the earth, that they may have organisation, form, and individual being.

Siddhiar says: "Entering the womb of Maya, (Asuddha) it regains dimly its intelligence, will and power. Putting on the further coats of Kala, Raga and Vidya, it shines in particular bodies. Further donning the cloak of the three *gunas* and their products such as *anthakaranas* etc., it perceives in advaita union with the same" (*Sup*, Sutra IV. 2·21).

Even according to Saivaism, the soul has to pass through three avasthas. In the *Kevala*, the soul is hidden in *Anava* and has no activities of any kind and it is lost or sunk like a bright diamond in a dirty pool or like the same diamond coated with dirt all round. In the *Sakala* condition (*i.e.*, the condition in which man has a body) its intelligence etc., receive play now and then through the aid of the physical faculties, just as the different facets of the diamond, reflect the light, now blue, now red etc., as each side is ground and rubbed of its dirt and ruggedness. When all its angles and ruggedness and dirt, are removed it reflects fully and steadily the Supreme Light and is merged in the same Glory.

When man throws off the material body as wheat rejects the chaff, and then he passes into open and conscious life in the spiritual world. There, freed from the encumbrances and restrictions of a material body, with their identity perfectly preserved, he will find full scope for the development of all good affections and the attainment of every joy. Every step from the conception to the grave, has been a preparation for this grand result.

Our life in the material body is the one step in existence. In a true order of life, it would have its beginning, its culmination and its end. There is certainly some connection between our body and the future life. In the true order of creation, the bird must attain a certain degree of development before it is born into this world. The condition of the bird after it is hatched is certainly superior to its

state of imprisonment in the shell ; yet, the bird has to be in the shell to complete that stage of its existence.

The man also is in his shell in this life. As to his spirit, which constitutes its identity and personality as a human being, he is in embryo in the womb of a material body. His spiritual organisation is effected in it, and without doubt, it is in the best possible conditions to have that work well done, for these conditions are provided and determined by God. Our life in this world is the basis for the superstructure of our whole being. We must therefore lay that basis and this cannot be done without following and completing the order of the Divine Providence with reference to our work.

The soul of man does not escape from the body as a gas from a vessel by its comparative levity. The separation of the spiritual body is effected by the Lord through the ministry of angels by a spiritual attraction. When the delicate task is fully accomplished without any pain or conscience on the part of those undergoing the change, man is then gradually and gently awakened and he finds himself amidst angels and friends in the spiritual world.

In this world, we see through a glass dimly and our knowledge concerning spiritual and divine things is mingled with many fallacies and appearances. In the spiritual world, there are many circumstances which will greatly facilitate our acquisition of knowledge of spiritual truth. In that world, we shall be freed from the encumbrance and limitations of the material body. Our senses and all our mental

faculties will be much more acute. Being in a world where all things are spiritual, there will not be that contrariety and antagonism which we find between our thoughts and affections and dead inert matter. We shall not be continually deceived by the illusions of appearances.

Millions of souls enter the spiritual world every year. When the Lord has created the human race for the purpose of forming a heaven out of them, is it possible to think, that He would fail to provide every necessary means for the accomplishment of His end in that world ? Swedenborg says that such means have been provided by the Lord and readers of Swedenborg's works know what they are. Hence it is not necessary for the soul to re-enter any body in this world again.

VII. OBJECTIONS MET.

The supporters of the theory of transmigration point out the differences in intellect, temperament, mind, constitution of body, in birth-right, in times, climes, ages, in race in sex, etc., to be due to the results of previous birth. It may be answered that the Divine mysteries are beyond our comprehension and that we cannot question the acts of God. There is no use of imagining causes for which there are no proofs. After all, the inequality among men may be only a seeming difference and no difference while in fact there is no difference. The net result in every case, after balancing pleasure against pain may be more or less the same. The reply of Jesus in answer to the question, " Rabbi, who

sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind." (John. IX. 27), rejects the suggestion made. He says: "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but in order that the work of God might be manifested in him." In creation, innumerable varieties of things are found and there is no use of attributing them to causes of which we have no proof. They all manifest the glory of God. Physiological explanations are given for those born blind. Those who want, an explanation as to why things are what they are, may read Swedenborg's "*Divine Providence*" and find a correct solution. The opponents of the theory also advance several arguments against it. Some of them are want of direct evidence, non-recollection of previous births and illegality of punishment in ignorance etc. The answers given by the defenders of the theory are not satisfactory. Louis Fuguier, a great supporter of the theory and who has written a whole book called "*Day after death*" says in that book: "With the exception of that *eclipse of the memory at each passage into a new* sphere, which seems to us incomprehensible and useless, we think with Jean Reynaud that the remembrance of our previous existence will return to soul when it inhabits the ethereal regions, the sojourn of the superhuman beings. In this manner only in our opinion can the defect of man's memory concerning his previous existence, be explained." Here is an admission of the great defect of the theory. The theosophist seems to say that as the man of flesh receives the influences from the higher planes as time goes on, glympses of past incarnations will flash on the lower consciousness. These do not explain why an ordinary man of the world cannot remember the past birth.

It has been stated by theosophists that there are living persons and that there were many, who remembered such past births. The explanation for the so called remembrance is stated as follows by Swedenborg: "An angel or spirit is not permitted to speak with a man from his own memory but only from the man's memory; for angels and spirits have a memory as well as man. If a spirit were to speak from his own memory with a man, the man would not know otherwise than that the thoughts then in his mind were his own, although they were the spirit's thoughts. This would be like the recollection of something which the man had never heard or seen. That this is so has been given me to know from experience. This is the source of the belief held by some of the ancients that after some thousands of years they were to return to their former life, and into every thing they had done, and in fact, had returned. This they concluded because, at times there came to them a sort of recollection of things that they had never seen or heard. This came from an influx from the memory of spirit into their ideas of thought." **(Heaven and Hell, Art. 256).**

Dr. Adolph Roeder, author of "*Man's two Memories*" speaks of another theory thus: "A more recent theory is that the two sides of the brain experience lassitude in different degrees: that, for instance, in a right-handed person the left side of the brain is used more than the right, since the right side of the body, in general is controlled by the left side of the brain. Therefore the left side tires before the right. The left side thus responds to impressions from without just a few thought—winks after the right. But

the brain—having like the spirit no sense of time—fails to record any idea of time with this lapse of response, and does not know whether the other thing happened a second ago or several years ago. Just so in dreams one occasionally lives through a period of time that seems to require years for its accomplishment, and yet only a few seconds of actual time are needed for the dream.

The reader is warned again not to allow his mind to make untenable generalizations. Immediately any mind becomes convinced that it is coming back to live another life, it immediately and naturally generalises the thought into the formula that everybody is coming back. That does not follow at all, even in Hindu Theology where the thought was first generated. Avoid generalization, and you avoid the prime source of false thinking."

Hence we may rightly conclude that the Doctrines of Reincarnation and Metempsychosis are not true.

GLOSSARY.

ADVAITA. Non-different.

ANAVA. See Mala.

ANTHAKARANAS. Internal organs like Manas, etc.

ASUDDHA. Impure.

AVIDYA. Ignorance.

AVASTA. Condition.

KALA. One of the 36 Tatvas.

KEVALA. The original condition of the soul before evolution.

GUNA. Quality.

MALA. Impurity, generic name like Pasa for Anava, Maya and Karma.

MAYA. Matter.

RAGAM. One of the 36 Tatvas.

RAJAS. One of the three qualities.

SAIVA SIDDHANTA. The philosophy of the Agamas.

SATVA. One of the three Gunas or qualities.

SIDDHIAR. One of the 14 books of the Saiva Siddhanta.

SUDDHA. Pure.

SUDDHAVASTA. Pure condition of the soul freed from matter.

SUTRA. A string of aphorisms or verses.

TATVA. Are evolutes of matter or Maya, divided into 36 classes. The highest is called Suddha Maya. From this there are five Tatvas called Sivatatvas. The middlemost is called Suddha-suddha or Asuddha Maya with seven evolutes, Kala, Ragam, Vidhya, etc. From one of these arises Prakriti with 24 gross evolutes from Buddhi.

TAMAS. One of the three Gunas.

VIDYA. See Tatva.

YOGI. One who practises yoga, psychical and spiritual practises of eight kinds.

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